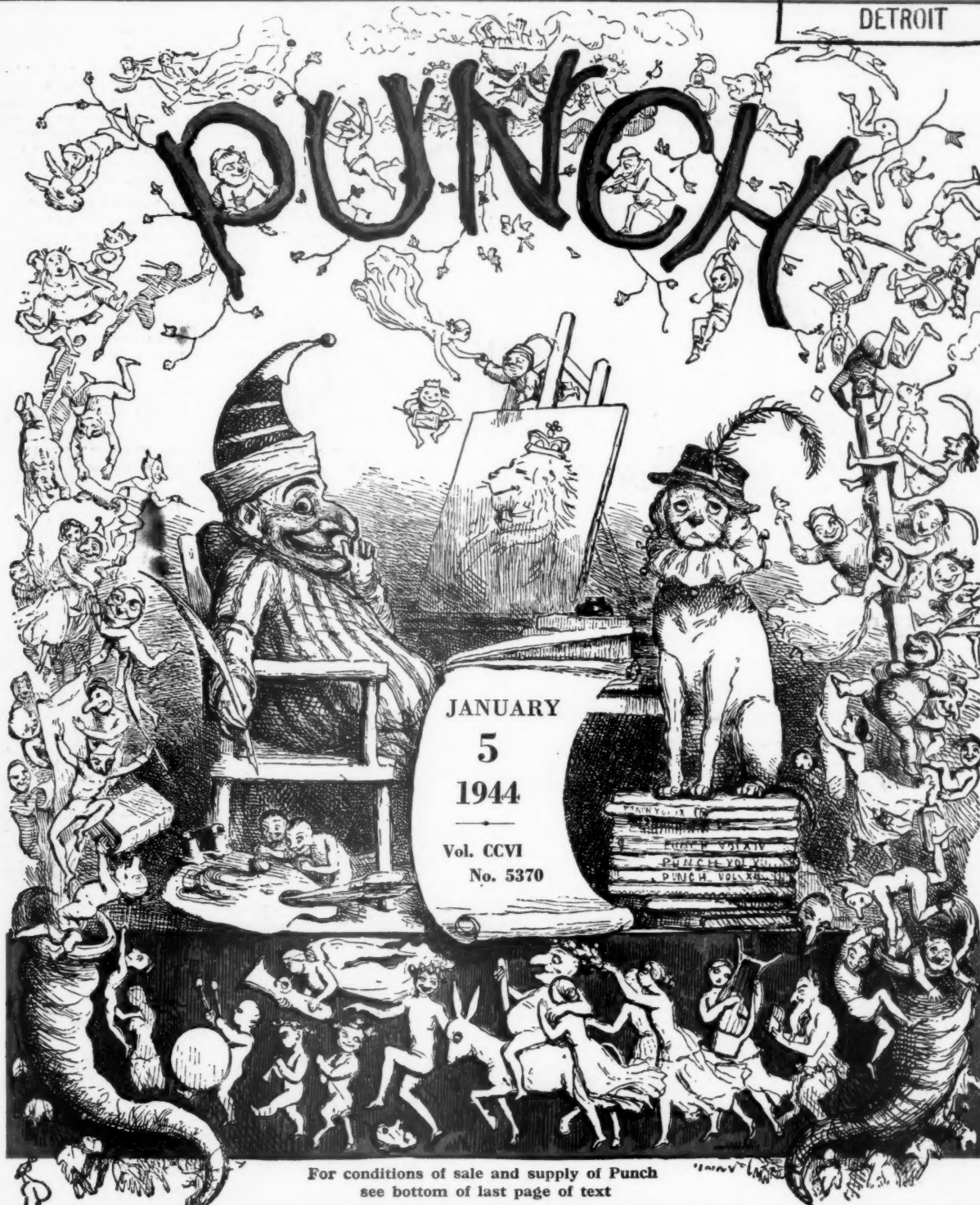


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The teachings of Confucius, which kept the young men at his feet long years back, will never be less true than they were then, even though the structure of our society seems to be completely changed by the discoveries of science and the invention of new machines.

Still, at the back of the machine, there is man's thought and man's expert hands, working out new things by old rules. It is as true now as ever it was that good work is dependent less on the quality of the instruments than on the quality of the user.

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The whole text matter affords an interesting example of what can be expressed in Basic English, which is being supported as a universal language.

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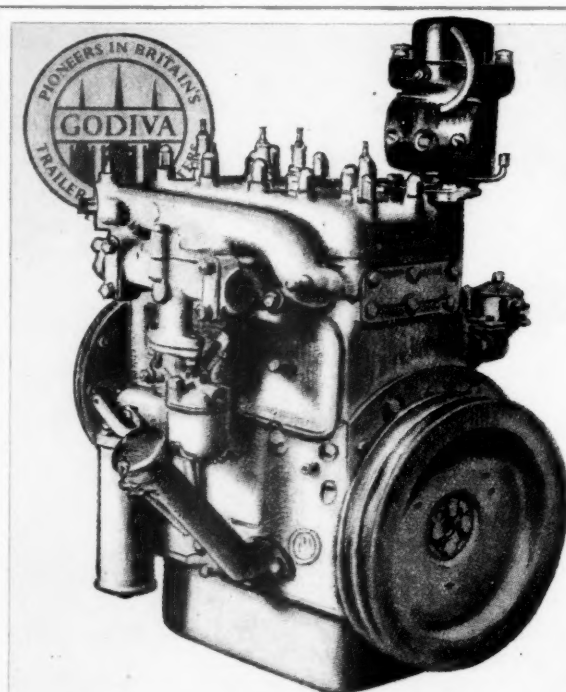
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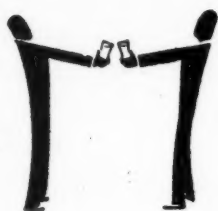
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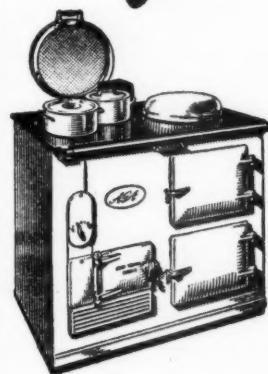
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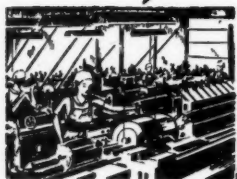
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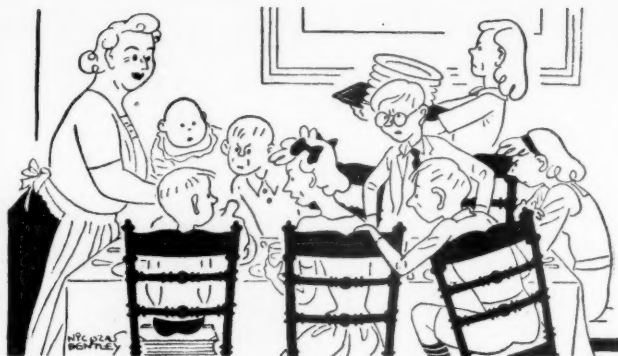


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is a
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... even in these days of substitutes, make-do and make-believe, which gives you unadulterated pleasure of the best Turkish leaf Of normal — which is now often so abnormal — size, it is of exceptional virtue. For, in Sobranie Turkish No. 6 is smoking which really satisfies — an aroma which is rich but never heavy, a full flavour which you can really taste and that quality of all the best Turkish leaf — almost complete absence of nicotine. Here then is a cigarette which can cut down your smoking yet give you a satisfaction that you have never known before...

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A GIN

AND

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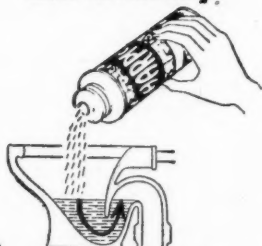
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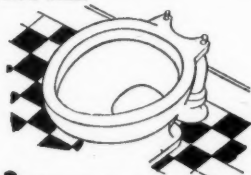
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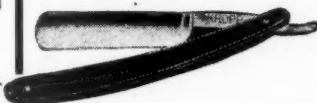
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We are making blankets as good as they can be made under the current Govt. restrictions. But they cannot be made like "MODERNA."

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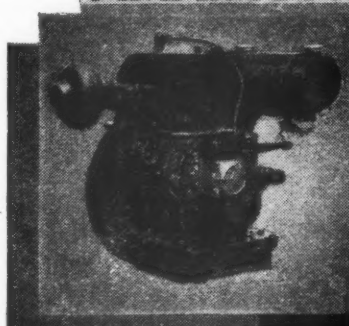
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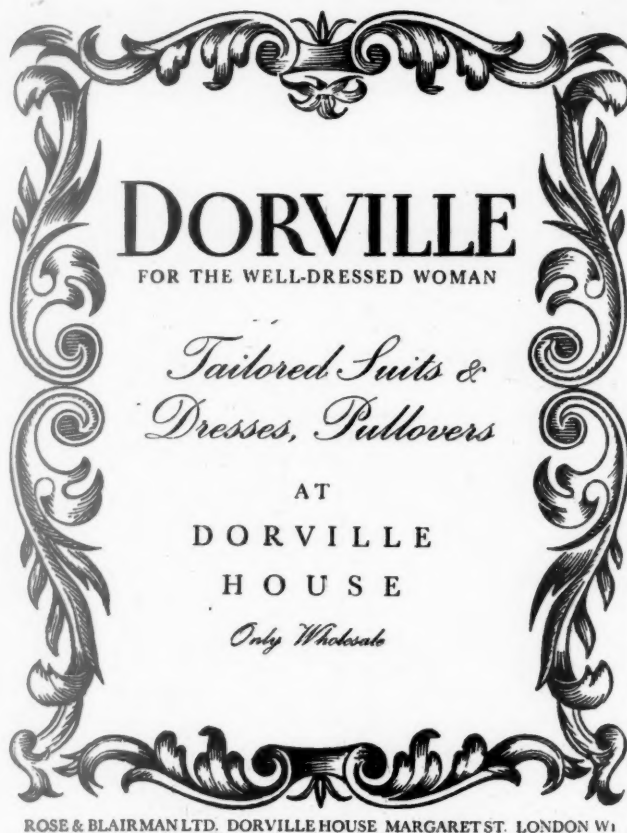
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The Hurricane Won!

"The Battle of Britain," as the official report shows, was a triumph for the Hurricane. The same engineering skill will be behind the post-war Armstrong Siddeley car—product of the same engineering group.



The story behind the post-war
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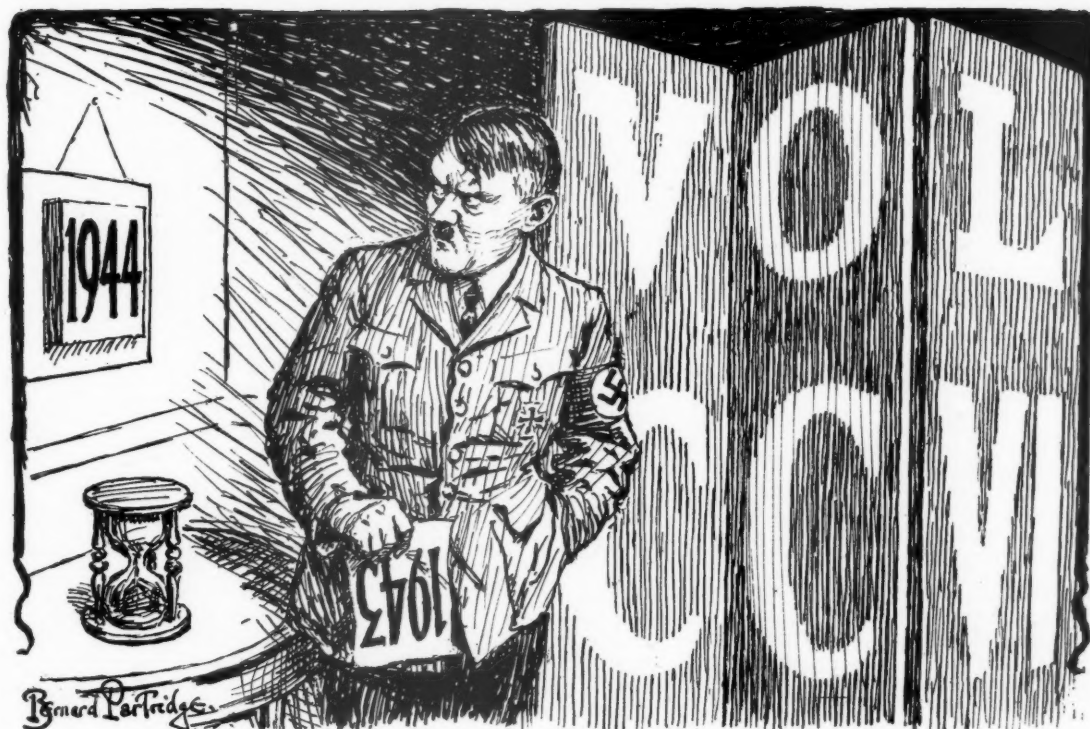


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GREYS
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Just honest-to-goodness tobacco
20 for 2/4 ★ 10 for 1/2

ISSUED BY GODFREY PHILLIPS LIMITED IN THEIR 100th YEAR



Leaves

FOR the last two months two dear old men have been coping with the leaves from the plane trees in the park which I cross at 9.15 daily on my way to the office. Their methods at first were picturesque and dilettante and the path was bordered with small smoking cones of leaves like volcanoes in a misty Chinese picture. But the more they burnt the thicker was the carpet of leaves even when the branches above were bare, and it seemed that *ex nihilo multum fit* or that the leaves, when burnt, shared the fabled quality of the Phoenix. And so, as the old men's patience was exhausted, the little smoking cones turned into great blazing beacons. But still the leaves increased and the old men's faces were sad like the faces, in Hades, of Tantalus, of Sisyphus and of the daughters of Danaus,

and like the faces of Arabs whom I saw once sweeping the sand off Mussolini's high road in the African desert; quickly as they cleared the road the desert choked it again behind them, for deserts do not respect dictators. Then the old men leant on their rakes and scratched their heads and tried a new device. Since fire would not destroy; they brought lorries and carried the leaves away, I know not where, and this time they succeeded. The leaves have gone and there is grass again, silvered with the rime of winter frost.

Potential Babes in the Wood will be well advised to avoid this now leafless park. If they wish to know its situation, they may write to me, c/o the Editor, enclosing a stamped and addressed envelope for reply.

Revelry

THE German Leader is said to be growing morose and solitary. He spends hours alone and even allows himself an occasional glass of wine. A sort of jingle came into my head when my morning paper told me this news.

It can't be the rats in the wainscot squealing,
Nor the wind that moans and will never rest,
Nor the cobwebs stretching across the ceiling,
But somehow or other I feel depressed.

It can't be the skeleton hand that rattles
Night after night against the door,
Nor the sound of pictures of North Sea battles
Constantly tumbling upon the floor;

It is possibly purely incidental
To a dinner of wine and toasted cheese
(No one can call me temperamental)
But I do feel jumpy on nights like these.

And our artist on the opposite page has drawn a picture of this Yuletide banquet scene. Let us leave it for a moment and turn to lighter, more frivolous themes. How enchanting to read in *The Times* (and I did read it on the self-same day) a leader in praise of unfermented apple-wine and a quotation from *The Times* of 1843:

"On Sunday we were shown a butterfly which had been caught by our neighbour Mr. Rooke, while gambolling with all the energy and gaiety of its appropriate season. We have also been presented with a beautiful bunch of primroses which were gathered by a friend in our immediate neighbourhood a few days ago.—*West of England Conservative*."

Pleasant it is indeed to remember that for more than a hundred years Conservatives have been plucking wild flowers at Christmas-time in the West of England and writing to tell *The Times* of their escapade, were doing so even at a date when a primrose by the Tamar's hem a yellow primrose was to them, and it was nothing more. For the flower had not become a League, Disraeli, like Bismarck, was but emerging from obscurity, and how much else was also unknown! Petrol, electricity lay hid. *In Memoriam* was incomplete. On the whole it was a careless age; but not in choice of words. Was it the elegance of the language (the writer speaks a little earlier of "enamelled meads") that so much affected me, or the use of the pronoun "we," so proper to the period, that carried me away and suggested a phantasy of that peaceful hour, that England of long ago? Few of my own present readers can have been alive at the moment, few even of the inveterate nature-lovers and correspondents of *The Times*. But I think it was then, as now, a hopeful turning of the year. I seem to see that that butterfly, whether it were Painted Lady or Red Admiral, Comma or Cabbage or Tortoiseshell, that beautiful bunch of primroses, intempestive signs as they were of the still distant spring, made a more than ordinary flutter in the family of West of England Conservative, and the family of Mr. Rooke. They must needs make merry over the adventure. "Come, children, let us away to the woods and the fields. Come, Emily, Susan, Edwin, Clara, Thomas, Wilberforce, Henry, Augustus, come." There was, I believe, immediately organized a kind of *fête-champêtre*, and both parties held a picnic together upon the enamelled meads. All carried butterfly-nets, all had baskets for primrose-gathering. They danced.

The tails of the cut-away coat of West of England Conservative, and of Mr. Rooke, went flying above their tight but large-checked trousers, the whiskers of young Henry and young Augustus blew bravely in the wind, the hooped crinolines of Emily, of Angelina, swung to and fro, keeping time with the pantalettes of the younger girls, the exiguous trousers of the little boy olive-branches. Bonnets and pork-pie hats fell unheeded on the sward.

"La!" cried Kate.

"Dooood fun, tol-lol," echoed Albert. There were nine young West of England Conservatives, I fancy, and eleven callow Rookes. Little they cared in that mood of merriment for the December damp underfoot. Goloshes they had not, pattens were judged unsuitable (they must always have been unsuitable) for morris-dancing; they had no waterproof leggings. Antigropeloes* lay yet within the womb of time.

It was but a short hour of madness. Peel and the Anti-Corn Laws were ever in the minds of either paterfamilias, and dinner was at half-past three. An hour or two later, not indeed over unfermented apple-wine, but over the second bottle of port, they would be discussing the terrible riots of the Chartists, the New Thames Tunnel, the advantages and disadvantages of the growing mania for steam.

"Foremost in the list of inventions" (so, I am certain, exclaimed Mr. Rooke), "by which mankind has benefited, stands the steam-engine; it is the vital principle of our machinery and manufactures; and is at once Titanic power which achieves the mightiest labour and the docile servant obedient to the feeblest hand."

"Tol-lol, guv'nor," drawled Edwin, stroking his whiskers.

"Be silent, boy," said West of England Conservative.

"By steam we plough the stormy billows in the teeth of opposing winds, and bring together the uttermost parts of the earth—by steam we delve the mine, raise the hidden ore to the surface, blast it with furnaces, and weld the glowing masses to purposes of utility—and by steam, if need be, we grind a pin or polish a needle's point. Yet I confess I often look back with a lingering sense of regret to the grand old coaching days."

With the walnuts let them linger, their faces flushed partly by unwonted exercise in the meadows, partly by Oporto wine. They cannot foresee the future. (I claim no copyright for this remark.) Let us return to the thought that the German Leader, dining alone, may be wondering for what purpose the German Empire began, and that West of England Conservative, grim and yet gay with apple-juice, may be gathering bunches of primroses in the immediate neighbourhood even as I write these lines.

EVOC.

Moom's the Word

"Another war-time innovation was the introduction of 'music while you work.' Whether this is an aid to production is a mute point . . ."—*Lincs paper*.

"Rationing has, of course, produced a flood of requests for literature on nutrition in war-time and a favourite recipe is one for roe-hip syrup which has caught the popular fancy, because no one in America knows what it is."—*Daily paper*.

We were a little puzzled ourselves at first.

*1848 N.E.D.



MELANCHOLIA

"I'm beginning to dislike this room."

Charivaria

"THE London taxi-driver generally carries a pack of cards with him," says a writer. This is handy for potential passengers to cut for a priority journey.

Men's vests are now without buttons. So when they come back from the laundry there is nothing missing if they come back from the laundry.

At the time of going to press the Nazi High Command has admitted slight local advances by the Wehrmacht.



"Steep Decline in Acute Rheumatism," reads a headline. This is not recommended.

"After the war there should be a long period of calm in the Balkans," says a writer. Yes, it will doubtless take a considerable time for conditions to become normal again.

The G.P.O. has issued a warning to people who have not taken out licences for their radio sets. It is *not* an excuse if you know all the jokes.

"A man and woman from the Commonwealth Prices Commission ate cream schanapper soup, lobster turkey, saute turkey, ice-cream and turkey, ice-cream and coffee, and got a bill for 15s. 2d."

Evening paper.

The twopence was for bicarbonate of soda.

Some people are really *too* cautious. An exasperated plumber tells us that nine out of ten of his phone-calls recently were from householders whose pipes had burst in the Straits of Dover.

"There is no beer like English beer in America," says a U.S. soldier. Neither is there in England.

According to a German paper General Rommel will, early in the New Year, return to Berlin. If any.

Most people have handed in their rubber ear-plugs for salvage. The carol barrage was very light this last Christmas.



A well-known hostess states that Hitler has killed bridge. All the same we still don't like him.

The Vicar Does His Best.

"Evensong, 3.30. Psalms 46, 48. Noble in B minor. 'Sleepers awake!' (Mendelssohn) (405). Hymns 53, 51. Voluntaries: Chorale Prelude, 'Sleepers awake!' (Bach). Introduction and Fugue on Chorale, 'Sleepers awake!' (Reger)." — *Rugely Mercury*.

£80 was recently paid for an arm-chair. A wealthy amateur strategist evidently transferring to new headquarters.

The wife of an American millionaire has given birth to a son. The father is doing very well indeed.

A Swiss frontier guard fired a shot at what he described as a strange animal attempting to cross into Switzerland. One theory is that it was a German scape-goat.



In view of the suggestions now being put forward for shortening the war, it is interesting to recall that the Nazis shortened it by nearly three years nearly three years ago.

"Whisky has no curative effect on the flu except in the imagination of those who drink it," says a doctor. Anybody who proposes to test the truth of this by purchasing a bottle at least proves that there is nothing wrong with his imagination.

A reader has been wondering what the average man will do after the war without his Home Guard and A.R.P. duties to perform. Dig up some of his older excuses again, obviously.

In consequence of the continued Allied ascendancy at sea we gather that Goebbels has been explaining to his U-boat commanders that he is rather too busy for them to sink very much tonnage just now.

Haircutting in Germany is rationed, men being allowed ten haircuts a year. Already there is an illicit trade in coupons run by a ring of bald black market operators.

H. J.'s Dramatic Fragments

I HAVE always found that a most suitable opportunity for cultivating the Drama is while waiting for paint to dry. When I am doing a picture I am so impatient to know how it is going to look that, even using bellows, I can hardly dry it up fast enough, and at such times composition is the only sedative. The following fragment dates from the time when I was waiting for "Ptarmigan Ignoring An Eclipse."

IT ONLY GOES TO SHOW OR THE PLEASURES OF VERACITY

(The scene is an auction)

AUCTIONEER. Lot 47, a set of noiseless geological hammers.

PORTER. The study of geology, one feels, is much neglected among the rising generation. It exercises the majority of muscles and brings the neophyte into close contact with the immensities of Nature.

FIRST BIDDER. Two shillings.

AUCTIONEER. There is a reserve price of two-and-three.

SECOND BIDDER. Done.

AUCTIONEER. No more bids. No more bids. We can't stay here all night, you know. Lots 48 to 112 are withdrawn owing to the owner recovering unexpectedly. Lot 113, a hunting lodge, twelve miles from Leicester, four reception rooms, one bedroom, usual offices, use of stables at week-ends, room for rock garden. Anyone want it?

FIRST BIDDER. Twelve hundred pounds.

SECOND BIDDER. Guineas.

CLERK. I should think, Mr. Wimble, he had better have it.

AUCTIONEER. All right, give him the key and the map. Lot 114, a cut-glass teapot.

THIRD BIDDER. Five shillings down and sixpence on Tuesday.

FIRST BIDDER. Monday.

AUCTIONEER. Certainly, certainly. Look how late it's getting. I'll take the next two lots together: a permanent seat at the Albert Hall and a roll-top piano.

PORTER. I shall demonstrate the latter by playing "La Cathédrale Engloutie." There is a programme note in the catalogue.

AUCTIONEER. I am sorry there is no time for encores. What am I bid?

FIRST BIDDER. Thirty-five pounds seventeen shillings and threepence.

SECOND BIDDER. To make it a round figure, I'll say thirty-four pounds.

AUCTIONEER. That's much simpler. You get it. Lot 117, a cargo of garlic. I don't know the tonnage of the ship but it has three funnels and is very definitely registered at Lloyds.

PORTER. Here is an attractive recipe: Stew a rabbit with six radishes and commensurate quantities of garlic and chestnut. Call it "Bombe Lapin."

SECOND BIDDER. Is the cargo insured?

CLERK. Only against riot.

FIRST BIDDER. How much is it worth?

AUCTIONEER. That obviously depends on whether you like garlic. Don't waste time.

THIRD BIDDER. Ten pounds.

AUCTIONEER. Nonsense! That's not even enough to pay my commission.

FOURTH BIDDER. No bid.

AUCTIONEER. Oh, is that so? We will play this one "Misère," so you get it anyway. Lot 118, a third share in *Coo! Ain't it a Lark!* now in its second week at the Irving Memorial Theatre, Deptford.

PORTER. This side-splitting performance features Ernie Bastable, J.P., "The Lad Who Gets the Laughs," La Chi-Chi and her female harpists, and Bernado with his trained sea-lions in scenes from the Arabian Nights.

SECOND BIDDER. I bid that set of geological hammers.

AUCTIONEER. There being no other bid I knock it down to you. Lot 119, a set of adenoids from the collection of a well-known surgeon, including many suitable for swops.

CLERK. I bid—

AUCTIONEER. You can't, it's not etiquette.

CLERK. Victorian, that's what you are. You ought to read B. Shaw. He just burns things like etiquette up; not much more than sack-cloth and ashes they aren't when he's finished with them.

AUCTIONEER. All right, all right. I'll be modern. You can have them for ten bucks.

FIRST BIDDER. Look here, I haven't had a chance.

AUCTIONEER. Well, then, you'll just have to come next time—Anglo-Saxon Water Colours and Mixed Shares. Please return the hammer downstairs, somebody. Who goes home?

FINIS

New Year

WE knew the promise of Winter weeks ago,
When, flying in the sign of victory,
The wild geese crossed our coasts

Above the bobbing masts
And the marshes; above land harvested, and the
English trees.

We heard the clamour in the clouds, the warning
Wings of Winter, and said only,
We know Winter and its calendars.

The fields lie lost under the Pleiades
As shadow-cold as meadows of the moon,
And the windless sky
Is crisp with frost and devious with spilt stars.
Branches now lace and lattice the air, and soon
The trees all tinsel-tasselled with shining snow
At early morning
Will like a lovely legend grow.

And we, like winter-weary wanderers,
Turn ever towards the Spring, thrusting away
Winter, the hindering winds and ways of it.
And only say,
Give us the Spring, the quickening hope of it:
We are travellers
On a long road, and we would make on. M. E. R.

At the Pictures

DESERT FIGHTING

In my notes about *Bataan I mentioned the last good silent film I ever saw, *The Lost Patrol*, and *Sahara* (Director: ZOLTAN KORDA) is an obvious cue to mention it again. Not only does the story have points of similarity, but also—probably for that reason—it was given to PHILIP MACDONALD, author of the book from which *The Lost Patrol* was made, to write for the screen. The beleaguered outpost in the desert is a popular film situation, and we have often seen it competently handled; here, linked with the Libyan fighting (before El Alamein) in the summer of 1942, and dominated by the powerful personalities of HUMPHREY BOGART as *Sergeant Joe Gunn* and a tank which he cannot bear to hear disrespectfully spoken of, it makes a memorable and exciting picture. The story is said to be "based on an incident in the Soviet photoplay *The Thirteen*"—that is, presumably, the business about the water—but broadly it is the old besieged-fortress story, and its merits, apart from the well-done fighting scenes, arise from the diversity of character among the little band of about a dozen men who hold out against and by skill defeat a battalion of Germans.*

The coincidences perhaps are rather extreme: the man sent with a message for help, lost in the desert, is luckily found almost at the moment of collapse, the shell-hole opens a well to provide the dénouement, and so on; but within the convention this does not much matter. Mr. BOGART makes the tank-loving sergeant a credibly authoritative figure, and of the others the one I found most impressive was J. CARROLL NAISH (too often given empty villainous parts) as the Italian prisoner.

Bad taste or no bad taste, I will be honest and admit that I enormously enjoyed *The Miracle of Morgan's Creek* (Director:

PRESTON STURGES); and a very large number of other people in the Plaza at the same time were greeting it with obvious and almost continuous delight. I have seldom heard such laughter in a cinema, and very

and this is superlatively well done. The whole thing, from beginning to end, has the breakneck speed and comic richness of the motor-caravan chase at the beginning of the same director's *Sullivan's Travels*. It adds to one's pleasure—mine, at any rate—to notice the directorial skill with which the laughs are piled up, balanced and crammed on top of each other; the judiciously-placed moments of slapstick, the successive turns of the screw by which the ludicrous extra twist is added to the already absurd entanglement.

The playing too is first-rate. BETTY HUTTON and EDDIE BRACKEN, comparatively unfamiliar faces, are beautifully right as the girl and her simple-hearted local Galahad; and WILLIAM DEMAREST is even more of a joy than usual as her sardonic and bull-headed father, *Officer Kockenlocker*.

Privileged to overhear two ladies talking of going to see *Jane Eyre* (Director: ROBERT STEVENSON), I noted that they were under the impression that Char Lott Bront was rather a heavy writer, but that all the same the story had probably been cut down a good deal. So it has been, but the essentials are still there; and the non-essentials, such as the gloom, the shadows, the ground-mist, the rain, and the storms, have been expanded and redoubled and magnified to fill up the gaps.

I had forgotten how melodramatic the story was, and how much it must have influenced later best-sellers such as *Rebecca*. JOAN FONTAINE is *Jane*, which makes nonsense of the one or two moments when she has to refer to herself as "plain"; but subdued she certainly is, as anybody would be so close to the overpowering performance of ORSON WELLES as *Rochester*. This performance is something to see, whether you approve of it or not. The film as a whole is not a success, but it is an interesting curiosity, and at least it should stop the two ladies mentioned above from continuing to mix *Jane Eyre* up with *East Lynne*, which of course (they agreed) was by George Eliot. R. M.



[Sahara]

MORE SAND

Jean Leroux	LOUIS T. MERCIER
Tambul	REX INGRAM
Sergeant Joe Gunn	HUMPHREY BOGART

seldom had the pleasure of joining in it. The reference to bad taste is made because some of the reviewers have seen fit to bring it up. I don't consider the alleged bad taste of basing a farce on unlooked-for pregnancy and the eventual birth of sextuplets should make the slightest difference to one's enjoyment of the farce if it is well done;



[The Miracle of Morgan's Creek]

SLAPSTICK WEDDING

J.P.	PORTER HALL
Trudy	BETTY HUTTON
Norval	EDDIE BRACKEN

At the Ballet

"LE LAC DES CYGNES," "JOB" AND
"PROMENADE" (NEW)

THE Sadler's Wells Company are now half-way through their ten-week season of ballet at the New Theatre. The centre-piece of their repertoire is *Le Lac des Cygnes*, which they are giving in its entirety with new costumes and décor by LESLIE HURRY.

It has undergone a magical transformation. Gone is the atmosphere of plush and moth-balls with which this classic has always been associated in one's mind, for without departing too far from tradition he has turned it into a real Hans Andersen fairy-tale. The blue-and-green castle in the first scene is the kind of abode that might incarcerate the fairest of princesses with the longest of golden locks, or the fiercest of man-eating ogres. It abounds in turrets whence Niagaras of boiling oil could be poured on to the handsome princes who never fail to turn up when princesses or ogres are in question, or on to any other unwanted visitors. This dizzy stronghold is the abode of *Prince Siegfried*, and ROBERT HELPMANN, richly dight and with a romantically-plumed hat, is a prince to make any youthful heart beat faster. MARGOT FONTEYN, as the Swan Queen *Odette* who is bewitched by a sorcerer and can only assume human form between midnight and dawn, is as appealing and delicate as the famous princess who was bruised by sleeping on a pea hidden beneath forty mattresses of down. And as the sorceress *Odile*, who steals the Prince's love for *Odette*, she has a steely glitter and a smile wicked enough to send shivers down the hardest spine. Her brilliant performance and the famous thirty-two fouettés bring storms of applause. And Mr. HURRY's ballroom ceiling fairly drips blue fan-vaulting unsupported by any pillar—but what matter? It is entirely delightful. His lakeside scene is the least successful of the three, for it gives one a claustrophobic feeling of being down a coal-mine (a blue one, of course) with rather a lot of water in the workings, and not on the shores of a mysterious lake on whose moonlit surface float enchanted swans. But the whole production is one of which the company may well be proud.

Job is a very fine creation that has been too long out of the repertoire. It is inspired by William Blake's *Book of Job*, and tells of the struggle between *Satan*, with his weapons of anguish and fear (a horrifying characterization by

ROBERT HELPMANN), and *Job* for the throne of his spirit. The music is by VAUGHAN WILLIAMS and the whole presentation is quite worthy of the grandeur of the theme.

The season's novelty is a *divertissement* by NINETTE DE VALOIS called *Promenade*, to music taken from various of Haydn's symphonies and arranged by EDWIN EVANS. It is a charming piece of airy nothing, which centres round a butterfly-catcher in the park (GORDON HAMILTON) who rushes, totters, crawls after, and always misses, his prey, when he is not burying

his nose in his book, while beves of young ladies in Kate Greenaway costumes take an airing with their governess, lovers meet, minxes behave with all the impertinence one expects of them in a ballet, and peasants dance Breton folk-dances with enormous gusto. Haydn's music might, strange to say, have been written expressly for this ballet, so well is it all in keeping, as are HUGH STEVENSON's décor and dresses in ice-cream colourings. This ballet will probably soon rival Frederick Ashton's *Les Rendezvous* in popularity. D. C. B.



"Now THIS one makes a noise rather like a dive-bomber."



"Third Floor—no buckets, no scrubbing-boards, no kettles, no electric irons . . ."

Rosy-Fingered? Huh!

THERE are so many people around
With dangerously unbalanced views
On the relation between virtue and discomfort
That I wish to make my own position in the matter
crystal-clear
As regards that rheumatic pandemonium
The dawn.

The early morning appears to have been more loosely
thought about
Than almost anything else.
An extraordinary notion has gained ground
That the earlier you get up,
Whether necessarily or not,
The nearer you are to being canonized,
While the later at night you are seen still on your feet,
Irrespective of what you are doing,
The more closely you are identified as a bad hat.
Why one period should have it over the other in the
way of sanctity
Is utterly baffling.

I think some people are natural alarm-clocks
And have circulations like the *News of the World*.
Well, given in addition the hide of a buffalo
And the sensibilities of a sea-urchin
There probably isn't much wrong with the early
morning,
And if merit is really to be acquired by dashing about
in it
Then a halo seems well within the reach
Of every moderately robust beetle.

My own assessment of the dawn
Is that it is a very horrible time indeed.
To me it seems to get worse every time I see it.
That is, daily.
I should have vastly preferred all its phenomena to have
happened
Behind an enormous cosmic curtain
Which would have been decently rolled up
By agreement with the management
At about ten o'clock.

One trouble with me is the birds.
I find them intolerably ingenuous at dawn.
Just wrenched from the off-shades of the subconscious
One can hardly be expected to adjust oneself
To finding Gracie Fields on every bough.
Later in the day is quite different.
Mentally thawed out
And suitably bolstered with nourishment
I extract keen pleasure
From anything the birds care to say.
It is the same with all the other goings-on of Nature,
Remarkable though they be.
I am just not ready for them early, while
Later I am.

It is no good saying I am a tender plant
In the herbaceous border we call life—
As I sense you were about to do—
Because there are millions who think as I,
Only we are the quiet unvocal type.
(We cannot shout as loudly as we might
If we had cared to add deep-breathing
To the other terrors of dawn.)

What I suggest to my fellow tender plants
Is that while the war lasts
We should continue to face our special ordeal cheer-
fully
(As heaven knows we are doing!)
But on condition that no nonsense is talked about being
better men,
Or having more fibrous characters,
Or stuff of that sort,
And that the moment the whistle sounds
We can set our backs to the dawn for good
By the simple process
Of turning over in bed.

ERIC.

o o o

Dogs

IT is a long time since I told my readers anything about
dogs, and then it was only how to keep one. I
propose to-day to be a bit less practical and talk
about dogs in general, dogs in general being well known to
have a certain set of characteristics which no dog in par-
ticular has. To put it in another way, a dog belonging to
someone has only the good characteristics, and a dog
belonging to someone else has only the bad; a useful
measure devised by Providence to keep dogs in with, but
subordinate to, the human race.

There are so many dogs in the world that an attempt to
hit the average in dogs' appearance has left statisticians
baffled. They point out, however, that dogs fall naturally
into two categories, plain or patterned. Plain dogs may

be brown, black or dirty white, and patterned dogs a mixture of any of these three colours, and the interesting thing about a patterned dog is that it enjoys a very mild kudos, there being at the back of its owner's mind an idea that the dog thought the pattern up itself. Furthermore, a patterned dog provides what logicians call something to talk about, many an awkward gap in conversation having been bridged by a dog-owner pointing out that one of the blotches on its dog is the exact shape of a map of Australia. A dog may also have long or short legs. Scientists tell us that short legs tend to make a dog seem less self-reliant and therefore give it a better time. All dogs have collars with metal discs which tinkle when they scratch behind their ears, and all dogs scratch behind their ears. A dog's ears may be any size or length, but are eligible for publicity only when they justify a special eating-dish. A dog's tail too may be any size and length provided there is enough there for the dog to wag or not, its tail being a dog's strongest moral weapon. A dog's next strongest moral weapon is of course its eyes, all dogs being equipped with very big brown eyes which all dog-owners are deceived into thinking unique, no dog's owner realizing that *no dog has small blue eyes*. Scientists and psychologists think this an interesting point.

Dogs are very fond of walking, or rather they are very fond of their owners walking, the idea being that the owner should follow a set path which the dog can check up on every now and then in passing. (There is a tradition, by the way, that a dog thinks that a walk is called a walkies, and so it is always called such when being spoken of to a dog. The result, naturally, is that every dog *does* think a walk is called a walkies.) A walk makes a dog either very muddy or very wet. When a dog is wet it stands still, gathers itself together and suddenly, as it were, buzzes all over; this sends the water off in a fine spray, leaving the dog merely damp. A muddy dog dries more slowly by evaporation, and the mud flakes off gradually on to the carpet. Certain types of dogs carry permanent burrs and thistle-heads in their ears and legs; such dogs, two or three times a year, have most of their hair cut off, when their publicity value takes a sharp upturn until they become themselves again. Thus its owner can never really feel happy about a dog like this, because it always has what its owner considers too much hair or not enough. Statisticians say, however, that a dog with too much hair tends, like a dog with short legs, to have a happier life, and for the same reason.

The eating and drinking habits of dogs are full of interest and have a long tradition behind them. All dogs are noisy drinkers, but as a rule the bigger the dog the noisier the drinker. Owners are always pleased to see their dogs drinking, because they know that their dog is now about to be not thirsty after having been so. Dogs are also noisy eaters; the noise here is caused by the dog pushing the tin plate its food is on round a stone floor till it pins the plate into a corner where it can do no more than rattle it. Dogs have to push their plates round because they have to push their food round the plate before they can catch it. It must all be very difficult, but it is so traditional that we can hardly expect any individual dog to work out a better plan.

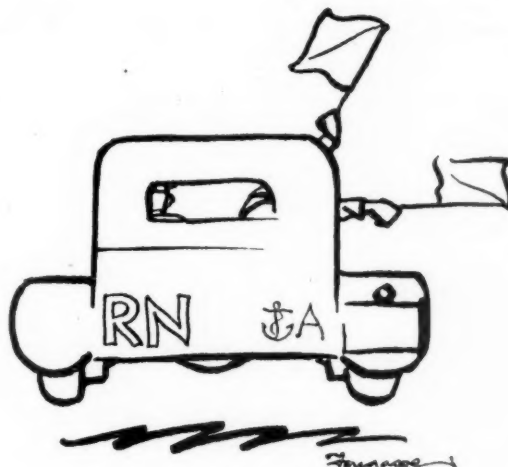
Traditionally, also, dogs bark at strangers, or any noise outside the front door. Originally this was to keep burglars away, but mankind has learnt that it has other uses; as an extra door-bell, for instance, and as a substitute for the first five minutes of conversation with whoever has

arrived, so that on the whole it works quite well. Dogs do not as a rule bark at other dogs; the average dog, on sighting another dog at a hundred yards, registers by telescoping itself to half its length and twice its height and whistling. All dogs, however, bark at cats; on a high, sharp and primeval note which rather shows up the bark they use on strangers as phoney, or done to humour their owners.

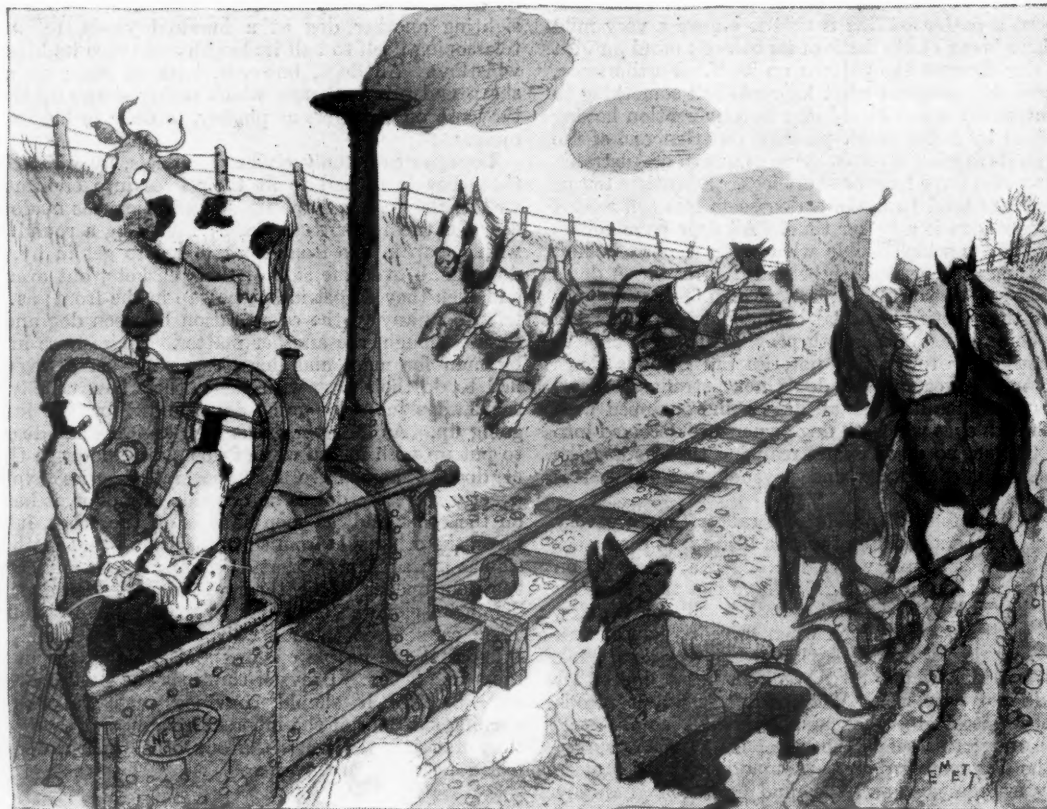
Dogs are essentially civilized animals, by which I mean that they have had to fit their lives into civilization as well as they can. Sometimes civilization has made things easy for them; for example, by inventing a round basket with a gap in the front for the dog to get in by. Most dogs climb over the side of their baskets, but every now and then they do get in by the gap in the front; as good a tribute as any to the co-operation between dog and man. Stairs, though, are another matter. Stairs were invented by man for man, and dogs, especially small dogs, have had to do their best with them, their best usually being a sideways jump for going down and a forward jump for going up. As for doors, everyone knows what dogs have to put up with in the way of doors, and doors in the way of dogs. There have been several theories explaining exactly why, if a dog is on one side of a door, it has to be on the other and, as soon as it is on the other, it has to be on the other side from this other side—that is, the same side as it was, though that does not make it any easier for the door-opener. One theory is simply that dogs think doors are clever. They like to see them open and shut. They cannot see them open and shut too often. They think that the people opening and shutting the doors for them like it too. I myself think this as good a theory as any, because it should convince even the dog-owner opening the door of the inherent goodness of the dog; and this, statistics tell us, is the one time when a dog-owner feels its conviction wavering.

"The country clergy were definitely behind their English brethren in culture, and even in theological knowledge. They were mostly Lampeter men who had seldom been able to burst the bonds of parochialism. One, I remember, pleaded at an archidiaconal meeting under the bishop's chairmanship, for frequent exchanges of curses as in the modern Methodist and ancient Franciscan policy."—From an autobiography.

Showed spirit, anyway.



The fact that goods made of raw materials in short supply owing to war conditions are advertised in this paper should not be taken as an indication that they are necessarily available for export.



"... Marginal farming, I suppose."

Advantages of Modern Life

I TURNED the shining tap and a torrent of scalding water rushed into the bath. Five inches and bedamned! It was a gala bath and should be honoured by a profligate twenty if it meant no bath for the rest of the week. I supposed we were permitted to save up inches and deposit them with the conscience, as points with the grocer.

As I peeled the cellophane from the pink ball of soap which had waited long years for such an occasion, exotic scents of '39 filled the bathroom. I scraped out the bath-salt pot and laid a bulky towel on the hot rail. A great yellow sponge floated over the surface of the water. White light, cunningly diffused from a strip of china, brilliantly lit up chromium and porcelain and glass with a voluptuous glitter; the square white bath, the streamlined mirrors, the tiled walls.

As I stepped knee-deep into the soft steamy water I remembered the chipped hip-bath of childhood, and the oak-grained can, lugged and tipped luke-warmly onto a flat cold surface.

As I lay transported in a hot vapourous couch, now turbid with purple bath-salts, pale steam deliciously clouding the air and enveloping me in its warm coils, I wondered if Nero himself had achieved such Elysium. Had such enravishment been the lot of Cleopatra, such felicity lapped the feet of Croesus? No such refinement of civilization had come the way of the Sun King, the height of Victorian comfort had never risen to this; it had taken the moderns to do it—to plan the well-appointed flat, the switch, the wire, the pipe, the button, the gadget, the laid-on luxury.

I languidly reached for the rosy globe of soap; it slithered lusciously

through my fingers. What sweet thoughts, what drowsy imaginings, what dreams of poesy filled the air! Delirious, lingering. Here, the flesh forgotten on a bed of roses, might the spirit soar . . . Then the telephone rang.

Mopping Up

"Nearly 8,000 solicitors and articled clerks can be absorbed into civil life immediately they are demolished by the services under post-war plans adopted by the Law Society."

Canadian paper.

Grand Splash

"... that army of voluntary workers who have spared no effort in making sure that the old city once again turned up trumps and swamped its target."

Rugley Mercury.



LOOKING BETTER



"If you want my opinion, all this talk about using elephants is just another part of the Carthaginian war of nerves."

English Islands or Lost Off Labrador

XIV

ONE never knows. I thought that all the crew were teetotalers. But the Bairds' boat crept in and called again this morning, and as she left I heard one of them ask wistfully if there was any rum on Frenchman's Island. There wasn't. One never knows. It reminds me of the Laughable Episode of Dry Islands.

That is not their real name. But as the steamer entered the wide and pretty bay, "blowing" merrily to say that she was coming, George said "Looks dry". We had spent many days travelling through the dense forests of Western Newfoundland: this island, on the east, had no trees at all, and that, I suppose, was what George meant. But it was "dry". The main denomination was the United Church, and they are generally dry—and don't think for a moment that I blame them. It must save a lot of trouble and treasure. There was not a sign of fire-water in any of the hospitable homes we entered: and this was one of the

rare occasions when we stayed in the same place for three whole nights. George stayed with Mr. A—— and I with Dr. B——. William, our leader, was across the bay. William, I should mention, is dry too, but in a most forbearing and reasonable way.

On the second day, when we were inspecting the lighthouse, George whispered that he was very tired and felt from time to time the need of fire-water. "I have asked that nice taxi-driver," he whispered, "and he says there is not a drop of fire-water in the whole island. HOW FAR CAN THE LIGHT BE SEEN?" he ended very loudly to the lighthouse keeper.

"I know," I said, "the whole island is completely non-consuming. I SEE THAT YOU ARE A RADIO-DIRECTION-FINDING STATION TOO! But I tell you what. I have still a drop of rum in my flask. If you can get hold of a bottle I will let you have a ration."

George said, "I EXPECT YOU HAVE SOME PRETTY GOOD STORMS HERE?"

My dear fellow, I can't be seen taking bottles into my place. My hosts are charming—but they are strict T.T. But I'll come up to your room this evening."

I said "JOLLY GOOD SHOW! No, you don't. My host is not only T.T., but a doctor. We can't have secret fire-water parties in his house. It would be fatal to goodwill. THANK YOU, MR. LIGHTHOUSE KEEPER!"

George agreed, and we left it at that.

Our last day in Dry Islands was lovely, the kind of day that makes you forget such words as fog and frost. It was Sunday, and in the afternoon I lay on a cliff, writing some new words for one of Newfoundland's favourite tunes, basking in the sun, but enjoying the beauty of three great icebergs. Icebergs, as I think I said before, are not incompatible with a warm summer day. Indeed, that same afternoon George dived off his host's motor-boat and bravely swam about, half a mile from an iceberg (I have done the same,

but it brought back the ear-trouble I started in the horrid Air).

I came back to the house about six; and, passing the living-room, I saw my nice hostess and another lady sitting with small brown-coloured glasses in their hands, which painfully reminded me of the bad old days of cocktail-parties and so forth. They called out to me the news that Mussolini had fallen, and I went upstairs to change with an appropriately lighter heart.

When I came down there were the same two ladies—but no small coloured glasses. I thought "It only shows what gross mistakes the most close observer can make." We discussed the fall of Mussolini and other palatable topics for about half an hour, and then Mrs. B—— said shyly: "I wonder if you have ever tried our Newfoundland rum?"

I admitted that I had tried it, and I consented to try it again. I did. We toasted the downfall of Mussolini and the Triumph of Right. Then the doctor came in, and we celebrated the downfall of Mussolini again. Then we went for a beautiful drive along the cliffs—rolling heavily among the rocks and ruts. In the gathering dusk the coast reminded me of Cornwall more than ever—except for the icebergs, looking like enormous ghosts.

On our way back we called on Mr. A——, George's host; and I at least was astonished to find Mr. A—— and George celebrating the downfall of Mussolini in the wine of the country. There then began a general discussion on the fall of Mussolini, the Future of Newfoundland, and Anglo-American Brotherhood. Nothing excessive was said or consumed; but all things were easier in all directions, and many important topics were discussed with freedom, frankness and profit which before had been avoided or played with. And I was compelled to admit that there was a good deal to be said for George's theory that the judicious application of fire-water does powerfully warm and liberate the springs of international goodwill. We and the Newfoundlanders and the American said things to each other we should not have dared to utter before.

The explanation of the mysterious sequence of events I have related is as follows. Somehow the rumour had crossed the sea before us that George and I were just as "dry" as William. On this point we were united. An improbable picture for a "Goodwill Mission", but that is what they got.

How seriously they got it you shall now perceive. During the celebrations of the Fall of Mussolini, George said

to his host, Mr. A——, "Well, cheer O! Jolly good rum! And, my hat, I could have done with a tot of this when I came out of the sea this afternoon!"

Mr. A—— said: "Cheer O! As a matter of fact, while you were swimming about among the icebergs my wife and I nipped down into the cabin and had a secret tot, *thinking you would be shocked.*"

There is much other evidence to support George's theory. There was Mr. Tiger, for example. We had a long

THE MOST IDEAL GIFT

"THEY are the most ideal gift I have received, and just what we need for our job with the winter coming on us. So if you have any more to spare, do not forget us—we have a crew of over twenty."

So writes a recipient from the PUNCH COMFORTS FUND. We must respond to this further appeal. You would have us do so, we know, so please help us to meet the requirements of this tanker crew, and of all those in the Fighting Services who look to us for their extra comforts. Donations will be gratefully received and acknowledged by Mr. Punch at PUNCH COMFORTS FUND, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

and wearing day of travel, we had visited three clergymen, one magistrate, one bishop and a frozen-cod plant. And when our good William had turned in, George and I sat down and tackled Mr. Tiger, the Wild Man of —. That is not his name, and it is not my description. It is the description of "Government circles". For Mr. Tiger keeps writing to the papers attacking the Commission of Government. Mr. Tiger was in the House of Assembly in the days when Newfoundland was still governing herself. He is not one of those who hesitate and say they are not sure whether Newfoundland ought to govern herself again. Mr. Tiger has no doubt whatever. In short, right or wrong, he is a sturdy patriot, loving his island and believing in her (and, between

ourselves, I wish there were more like him). But he is not an easy type to engage in argument. Feeling as he does, he thinks of Great Britain with lurking resentment and suspicion; and the sight of a British Member of Parliament brings it all out into the open. He has the sad illusion (shared by many) that we enjoy the present situation, that it is fun for us to see Civil Servants at work in his Parliament House, to be responsible for an undemocratic and not very popular regime in an island which has governed herself for nearly a hundred years and was the birthplace of the Atlantic Charter. He begins by shouting all the familiar grievances. Why didn't the United Kingdom buy the iron ore from the Bell Island mine—instead of letting the Germans have it? What about those ninety-nine-year leases? And why don't we send better men to be Commissioners? When you are half-way through the answer (if any) to grievance one, he begins (if you let him) on grievance two. No teetotaler, no superior Government chap, starting with a prejudice against a Wild Man, can stay the course for ten minutes. They remember other engagements—or go to bed. But old hunters like George and me, fortified with a beer or two and accustomed to finding flowers of humanity and interest in most unpromising places—we settle down and handle such a man, with humanity and interest. We suspect that there is something there: and as a rule we are right—not always. In this case we were. We shouted back at Mr. Tiger; but we shouted Goodwill; and he began to listen. We called him all sorts of names, and he loved it. We admitted our faults, and he thawed and mellowed. We discovered a rough, rugged, puzzled, but earnest patriot. We learned a lot; we finished friends; and we had won one more exhausting action in the Battle of Goodwill. But it is perfectly true that we turned in rather late; and all that William said next morning was "You chaps made a frightful noise last night." Well, he was right. A. P. H.

Short-lived Fashion

"14-day striking cloak, £4."

Advt. in Watford paper.

"A CLAMP-ANYWHERE LEG VICE"
Headline in "Commercial Motor."

Rheumatism, what?



Communication Effectuated

AS things are at the moment I do not feel in any way justified in regarding myself with satisfaction, let alone with pride.

My ignoble efforts at map-reading having terminated in a perilous forced-landing—an alarming escapade which was fortunately achieved with surprising success—I have just communicated my present whereabouts over the telephone to the gentleman in the beautiful black helmet.

I was fully prepared to listen submissively to a stream of invective directed at my inexcusable carelessness, but to my great surprise the voice that reached me sounded unbelievably subdued. It may well be that the gentleman possesses beneath that

obdurate exterior an unsuspected streak of indulgent consideration. Possibly my prolonged absence from the aerodrome had even begun to give rise to a feeling of apprehension in his mind, so that when at last he heard my apologetic explanation, voiced in so halting and diffident a manner, he was immeasurably relieved to discover that I had merely departed temporarily from the aerodrome and not permanently from the universe. It is indeed gratifying to think that he may cherish such kindly concern for a creature as insignificant as I.

What occasions my despondency, however, is that I consider I displayed a remarkable inefficiency in my answers to the gentleman's questions. It was

obvious that he would desire to be acquainted as accurately as possible with my location, and to this end I had approached a farm labourer busy at his work in a neighbouring field. I am regrettably unconversant with the dialect of the locality, and this, together with the fact that the labourer's diction was impaired by an almost total absence of teeth, rendered it extremely difficult to extract the required information. For a moment I considered the advisability of proffering my map and requesting him to place a horny finger on the exact spot on which we were now standing, but I concluded that to thrust suddenly before him a polyconic projection of this portion of the globe might conceivably reduce him to a state of suspicious incredulity. I had to be content, therefore, with such information as I had managed to acquire in the hope that it would be sufficient.

It was not.

It became necessary to attempt to clarify the situation by recounting the courses I had flown immediately following my departure from the aerodrome, but I felt bound to admit, should my statements appear somewhat confusing, that I could neither vouch for the accuracy of the statements nor the accuracy of the courses. Eventually it was decided to rely on the gentleman's incredible familiarity with practically every blade of grass in the vicinity, and turning to other matters of equal importance he began to make inquiries concerning the welfare of my aeroplane.

I was alarmed to discover how ill-prepared I was to answer his questions. I had failed to ascertain the quantity of fuel that remained in the petrol tank. I had also to admit that I had not subjected my undercarriage to so rigorous an inspection as it appears I should have done, and finally I am singularly incapable of calculating the dimensions of a specific field in terms of rods, poles and perches.

Saddened by these reflections I have now returned to the field wherein my aeroplane is parked, but oh, mercy me, what is this I see?

A few cattle whose presence in the field had hitherto escaped my notice are showing a keen interest in the machine that has encroached upon their domain. Moreover it appears that the amyl acetate with which I believe the fabric of the wings is liberally coated is a delicacy to be preferred to their normal pasturage. Leastwise a beast of astonishing proportions is engaged in slowly devouring the port aileron with the relish of an epicure, whilst another is conducting

a thorough investigation of the rear cockpit and endeavouring, as far as I can see, to shatter the compass—possibly with a view to consuming the alcohol contained within the bowl.

Others of this savage herd are spaced around the fuselage—one, I notice, is eyeing the pitot tube on the wing strut with growing suspicion, another is attempting to arrest an aggravating irritation by rubbing the affected part vigorously against the rudder surface, and a third has taken a firm stand beneath the engine and is allowing the slow trickle of oil that emanates from the exhaust pipe to flop lazily on to an enormous tongue.

I have no doubt that the scene is probably symbolic of rural England at war, but my main concern at the moment is that yet another error of my aeronautical ways has been committed. Do I not now remember the importance of placing a guard over the aeroplane in the event of a forced-landing—a guard which may even consist of civilians, provided they are judged "suitable"?

I am of the opinion that I am nearer the very depths of despair than ever before.

I must confess that I have always harboured a peculiar fear of cattle—even of heifers, which I believe these to be—but that is nothing compared with my fear of the consequences should I fail to prevent them from completely ravaging my machine. With a hoarse whoop, therefore, I charge towards the destructive beasts, tearing the Y-pieces from my headphones and brandishing them above my head with fiendish determination. Rather to my surprise the creatures become electrified with terror and bolt with one accord for the furthest corner of the field. With some measure of satisfaction I notice that the brute which was treating my aeroplane with such odious contempt as to scratch its hindquarters against the rudder caught its slaving snout an appalling thud against the fin in the haste of its departure.

The bravery of my action has to a very limited extent revived my failing

spirits, but it is with considerable apprehension that I examine the damage my aeroplane has sustained. The port aileron is slightly frayed at the trailing edge, but I am relieved to discover that the heifer apparently considered the "ribs" would prove too much for its digestive organs and has left them severely alone.

Smoothing out the fabric to some semblance of the shape of an aerofoil section, therefore, I lean in utter dejection upon the wing and gaze dismally skywards in search of the aeroplane that is probably at this very moment being guided by the firm hand of the gentleman in the beautiful black helmet to effect my immediate rescue.

o o

No Spoilsport He

"A letter from the Assistant Chief Constable raised no objection to the testing of air-raid warning sirens, provided no sounds were produced."

Kent and Sussex Courier.



"See what they're using now to push the buses along!"

At the Play

"THERE SHALL BE NO NIGHT"
(ALDWYCH)

THIS is the play which ROBERT SHERWOOD originally wrote about a cultured family in Finland wiped out by the Russian invasion, and then, as circumstances altered cases, switched to a cultured family in Greece wiped out by the German invasion. During the process a number of new passages have been rung in, including part of Pericles' funeral oration, a verse from Byron, and more than one speech about Athens and the foundations of democracy. It is impossible to tell how much damage has been done in the adaptation to what emerges as a long-winded, loose-jointed, slightly shoddy emotional drama. It certainly suffers by comparison with the neatly constructed variation on the same theme, *Watch on the Rhine*—Lillian Hellman's play being about savage Europeans visiting America and *There Shall Be No Night* about Americans visiting savage Europe. Mr. SHERWOOD follows the scheme of his *Abe Lincoln in Illinois* in presenting scene after scene without much in the way of a climax; further, many of these scenes are what in the lower levels of the drama would be called corny. The comic Cockney sergeant discussing what he is fighting for (while the battle roars close by them) with two American ambulance drivers, one a poet, the other tough ("No, kid, I don't feel like laughing at you now"); the sinister and improbable German consul; the reporter (who probably appears as a more heroic figure in the United States than over here, where we take our newspaper-reading lightly) broadcasting feverishly from his luxury hotel; the too frequent speeches which recall Oliver Goldsmith's description: "I learn from them that we should not resist heaven's will, for, in resisting the will of heaven, heaven's will is resisted"—yes, all these things are corny, or rather perhaps they have been made so by the wide, wide gulf dividing a New York audience, 1940, from a London audience, 1943. In the words of an American critic, it "did what many lectures, exhortations and sermons could not do; it aroused the U.S.A. to want to do something practical for the cause of freedom." Are we to be blamed if we look at it with eyes a little more jaded?

Having got as near as is decent to saying that this play, which won the Pulitzer Prize for the nobility of its ideas, is bad, one must add that it is

successful. It is one of the awkwardnesses of stage history that good actor-managers do succeed, in fact they revel, in bad plays, and ALFRED LUNT and LYNN FONTANNE, as the distinguished Greek scientist and his wife, are superb in this one. Facing a flu-ridden house, Mr. LUNT delivers a speech over five minutes in length without a single cough from the audience before the first scene is even under way. This surely is a triumph of artistry. He allows himself more facial gesture than most English actors, and the most moving moment of the play was the agony he expressed, without words, on receiving the news of his son's death from wounds. He is able to convey emotion even with his fingertips, even with the false jauntiness with which he looks at his new uniform in the glass. A crucial test of acting comes at the lines: "Excuse my saying so, but looking after air-raid casualties isn't suitable work for a winner of the Nobel Prize"—to which the scientist answers "It isn't suitable work for any member of the human race." How easily the false heroic could creep into this line—and how quietly, effectively, almost throwing his words away with a turn of the hand, Mr. LUNT delivers it! Miss FONTANNE, needless to say, is an admirable partner to him in everything. Graceful, caressing, swanlike as when she charmed London in *Amphitryon 1938*, head proudly poised, she plays the American woman of the world who shows what stuff she is made of when that world collapses. Her only failure was at the very end of the play, when she was required to make the transition from dignity to grimness, and to stare out of the windows, gun in hand, while the old uncle softly plays the piano and the curtain falls. For the rest she is faultless.

The play suffers, even more than most of its kind, during the short intervals when the main actors are off the stage. Admirable generals, the LUNTS must look hard for supports. MURIEL PAVLOV and TERRY GRANT play the young lovers with charm and pathos; but NORMAN WILLIAMS, in the part of the American reporter, to which the author has given not even a shade of characterization, has evidently given things up as a bad job and simply sits about the stage with an engaging smile. GERARD KEMPINSKI, as the German consul, is hampered by what certainly sounds like a Russian accent. FREDERICK LLOYD, as the old uncle, seems to have strayed out of *Toad of Toad Hall*. DAVID PEEL's attempt to play an American ambulance driver as John Gielgud in *Hamlet* is not very

satisfactory. But the root of the trouble is that the play requires the whole cast to talk about the eternal verities, and they don't seem used to it.

P. M. F.

Storks and the R.A.F.

THE R.A.F. Mess, Prangmere, last week again went into committee, the subject being storks. Pilot-Officer Nosedyeve opened the discussion by saying that when circling the airfield that morning preparatory to making his usual wizard landing he nearly collided with a heron. Wing-Commander Blower said was he certain it was a heron. Pilot-Officer Nosedyeve said there was nothing else it could be with legs like that. Squadron-Leader Undercart said it might have been a stork, storks had legs like that too, did he happen to notice if it was carrying a Little Bundle. Flying-Officer Talespin here said that the Common Stork, *Ciconia alba*, was closely allied to the heron, also to the spoonbill and ibis. . . . His speech continued.

Pilot-Officer Nosedyeve, addressing Squadron-Leader Undercart above and through Flying-Officer Talespin's speech, said storks were mostly white, sir, with a red spinner and a black tail unit, this bird had normal camouflage, and so obviously was not a Coastal Command type.

Flying-Officer Flaps said could he hear any bad engine rattle—storks, he had always understood, made a terrible clattering with their bills. Pilot-Officer Nosedyeve said how the ruddy hell could he hear anything above his own engine. Wing-Commander Blower said if storks' bills were anything like the size of Flight-Lieutenant Lyne-Shute's bills at the bar each month they should easily be heard above a four-engined heavy bomber.

Flight-Lieutenant Lyne-Shute, awaking from a brief zizz, said did someone mention the word bar, was it time for a noggin? Squadron-Leader Undercart said with some people it was always time for a noggin, but at the moment the subject was storks, Pilot-Officer Nosedyeve had apparently formatted on a stork when coming in to land. Flight-Lieutenant Lyne-Shute said half a minute, more important business, waiter, a beer, now what was all that about storks?

Pilot-Officer Rudder said storking of talks, he meant talking of storks, what did they do with those long legs when flying? Pilot-Officer Stall said surely an undercarriage that size must be folding and retractable. Flying



"I suppose I ought to consider my husband's tastes—after all, it's his coupons I'm spending."

Officer Talespin said, no, they let them stream out behind, rather like towing a drogue. Pilot-Officer Stall said with an undercarriage constructed on those lines landing must be very difficult, he for one wouldn't care to fly a kite with an undercart about half as long again as itself, there'd be no future in it.

Wing-Commander Blower said nonsense, storks even landed on roofs and that was more than any of those present could do, why, storks' hangars were even built on the tops of roofs. Flying-Officer Flaps said but probably they lived on roof-tops specially to facilitate handling their undercarriages, rather than in spite of them, they could taxi down the slope for take-off and up the other slope for landing, this latter preventing the stork over-shooting and having to go round again.

Flight-Lieutenant Lyne-Shute said that as the waiter seemed to be going round again he'd have the other half.

Pilot-Officer Prune said the thing that puzzled him about storks . . . Flying-Officer Flaps said did anything puzzle Prune, why, he always thought

that he (Prune) knew everything. Pilot-Officer Prune said, har, har, har, very funny. Flying-Officer Flaps said it definitely was. Pilot-Officer Prune said in his opinion Flaps was a clot. . . . Wing-Commander Blower said now boys, and Squadron-Leader Undercart said let him (Prune) stop nattering and get on with what he was going to say. Pilot-Officer Prune said blow him down, now he had gone and forgotten.

Pilot-Officer Nosedye said that what struck him as so wizard was all the heavy bombing work storks must put in. Squadron-Leader Undercart said what heavy bombing work? Pilot-Officer Nosedye said all those operational trips carrying babies, he didn't know what the annual world birth-rate was but it must mean a maximum-effort job for all stork squadrons every night, wizard. Pilot-Officer Stall said by gum, yes, and no help from the Pathfinders either, because babies had to be dropped at scattered points. Pilot-Officer Rudder agreed, adding that the nearest storks

had probably ever got to a concentration raid must have been about eleven years ago at Fort Callender, Ontario.

Wing-Commander Blower said on the other hand one had to consider the bomb-load in relation to the weight of the aircraft; babies, he was credibly informed by his wife, were normally about eight pounds, and an eight thousand pound cookie would therefore be smaller in comparison to the weight of a Lancaster, which must weigh more than a thousand times a stork. Let him see, a Lancaster weighed, no, better start with the stork, assuming a stork weighed about . . . The last speaker here relapsed into silence with a paper and pencil.

Pilot-Officer Rudder said accurate identification of the aiming point before parking the squawkie was very necessary, but at this point the entrance of Group-Captain Boost brought the committee meeting to an abrupt close.

Flight-Lieutenant Lyne-Shute said he was tired of listening to all this stork, waiter, same again, please.

A. A.



"Sir Charles wants to know if he can have rather less potato and a little more sausage and gravy."

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

A New Series

IF the post-war world does not function smoothly it will not be for want of counsel and admonition. Example is doubtless better than precept, but there is such a quantity of precept about at present that it must be equivalent to a fair amount of example. If one may judge from the first two volumes in the "Cross-Roads" series (*France*, by Dr. JACQUES MÉTADIER. *Czecho-Slovakia*, by CECILY MACKWORTH and Dr. JAN STRANSKY. MACDONALD, 5/- each volume), its aim is to present English readers with a sketch of the past history and future plans and prospects of the nations now at war. The editor, Miss Barbara Barclay Carter, has entrusted each nation to someone predisposed, usually by birth, in its favour. Don Luigi Sturzo, for example, is writing on Italy; George Soloveytechik on Russia; Major J. G. Elgoth Ligocki on Poland; Dr. Karl Spiecker on Germany; Dr. Yuen-Li-Liang on China. No other course was open to Miss Carter, but anyone who reads the whole series, when completed, may wonder why such a collection of generous, well-disposed and high-hearted nations should not have hit it off better with one another. According to Dr. MÉTADIER, the intentions and motives of the French people have always been honourable. The idol of the French patriot, Dr. MÉTADIER says, is neither Louis XIV nor Napoleon I, but Joan of Arc; for

French patriotism, like that of Joan of Arc, is innocent, daring and unselfish. France has remained essentially Christian; she has conducted more vigorous crusades than any other country on behalf of spiritual ideals; she is the land where the arts are in highest favour, and whereas an English father will send his son to the National Gallery to keep him quiet or as a punishment, a Frenchman will visit the Louvre or the Luxembourg in search of inspiration as often as ten times a year. Humility, indeed, seems to be the only virtue pre-eminence in which Dr. MÉTADIER does not claim for his countrymen. With much of what he says in praise of France everyone will agree, but it might be helpful in future if Frenchmen could recognize that charm is not a monopoly of France, to say nothing of Frenchmen. The authors of the Czecho-Slovakian volume are less extreme, and though they tend to apportion all the vices either to Austrians or Germans, their sketch of Bohemian history is very readable. Their hopes for the future are not extravagant, for they have not forgotten "Neville Chamberlain's famous remark about the 'little, unknown people'"; but they draw hope and inspiration from the memory of President Masaryk, to whose life they devote the most memorable chapters of their book.

H. K.

Sed contra audentior ito

IN these days of "security" the career of a man who lived from hand to mouth and worked his way to the front of a great profession is tonic reading. At eight Dr. HARRY C. DE VIGHNE was a waif in the New York of 1884. He had vague memories of vanished Cuban parents, he was a bright lad, he wanted someone to want him; and he didn't dislike work. Race, grit, intelligence, and a generous interest in a raw world still malleable to such qualities saw him U.S.A. Health Commissioner to the Territory of Alaska thirty years before the end of *The Time of My Life* (HALE, 10/6). In the interval he had been "adopted" by an Iowa farmer; witnessed the last stand of the blanket Indians against the whites; worked a mule-team; painted houses; and tended performing dogs. At nineteen he was enrolled as a medical student by a brilliant but heretical St. Louis doctor; but a spell of gun-running to Cuba intervened before enough was saved and borrowed for a degree in California. Pioneer days in Alaska and the ultimate discovery of the writer's kinsfolk round off a narrative, whose combative zest, coupled with a certain critical sub-acidity, has a flavour of its own. H. P. E.

The Structure of Conflict

Captain CYRIL FALLS is undeniably entertaining when he calls to mind the story of the forced march of Claudius Nero to the Metaurus, or tells of sixteenth-century Gaston de Foix conducting the glittering campaign culminating in the Battle of Ravenna, or demonstrates how Wellington outmanoeuvred Marmont at Salamanca, but unfortunately he feels compelled to curtail and apologize for these stirring extracts from old history as mere illustrative digressions, and almost immediately he returns—in *Ordeal by Battle* (METHUEN, 6/-)—to the serious, not to say portentous business of dissecting war into its component principles. A good many other writers have been at that, from the ancient Chinese sage Sun-tzu to Clausewitz and Jomini, the net result to the lay mind being much like cutting a cake into numbered slices—the exact position of the knife being less important than the ingredients in the cake. One may separate tactics from strategy and leadership from logistics with the present writer, or may

prefer, with Foch, to distinguish economy of force from liberty of action and *sûreté* from liberty of disposition, but one can never prevent these elements from getting mixed up in practice. The method, however, is convenient for a serious study of war and can be applied to those recent campaigns in which all our interest is centred. The thrill does not quite vanish even under the coldest analysis.

C. C. P.

California Can Take It.

Recent research has shown that the rat fed on a diet of white bread, margarine and tea becomes not only diseased but quarrelsome, and ends by eating his neighbour. Mr. JAMES M. CAIN, handling the human fodder of his novels as if it were an extremely low type of laboratory fuel, arrives, one notes, at the same result. The cast of *Mildred Pierce* (HALE, 8/6) would disgrace the rodent population of Hamelin or the sharp-set besiegers of Bishop Hatto. But luckily for the waning credit of human nature there is a snag in all this "scientific" observation of imaginary characters. So much that makes for humanity is omitted by Mr. CAIN's attitude towards "the greatest American institution that never gets mentioned on Fourth of July—a grass widow with two small children to support." And his climax—in which a hard-working but dissolute mother tries to murder the child who has flouted her devotion and secured her favourite gigolo—is the climax to a nightmare. It is the quality of nightmares to be ruthlessly precise about the incredible. On the other hand, California may be like that. If so, the exceptional brutality of Mr. CAIN's homeopathic treatment may be very good for California.

H. P. E.

An Unusual War Novel

Mr. NIGEL BALCHIN's *The Small Back Room* (COLLINS, 8/6), although a war novel, has an unusual theme. Its hero, *Sammy Rice*, is a research scientist, and his job is to test new military inventions. A cripple with an aluminium foot, he is sensitive about not being on active service, intensely in earnest about his work, and proportionately disgusted by the vanity and self-seeking of most of his colleagues and their complete indifference to the interests and security of the fighting men. *Waring*, for example, who acts as a kind of liaison officer between the research section and the department to which it is attached, is anxious for a new gun to be passed as satisfactory. "Now the Reeves gun is important. The Minister's really interested in that," he says to *Rice*, who argues without effect that the gun is not really workable, and will let down any troops that use it. The head of the section, a university professor, is not an intriguer or an opportunist, but he regards science as an end in itself, scientists as the only people who matter, and scientists other than himself as either fools or knaves. Outmanoeuvred by more mundane egotists, he returns to his university, and an empty self-satisfied pedant takes his place, to the dismay of the real workers and the satisfaction of *Waring*. Meanwhile *Rice* in his spare time is helping a *Captain Stuart* to investigate booby-traps which have been dropped by German planes. A number of persons have been killed, and the culminating scene in the book, when *Rice* crawls over a beach to neutralize one of these traps, is brilliantly done, the author succeeding perfectly in the delicate task of sustaining the suspense without scamping the necessary technical details. *Rice's* nerves give out just before the job is finished, someone else completes it, and *Rice* returns to town with his chronic self-dissatisfaction inflamed to acute self-disgust. "It always came back to the same thing in the end," he reflects. "I'd made the fuss and someone else

had always done the difficult bits." Doubtless, had he completed the job, he would soon have found some other reason for indulging his ruling passion of self-depreciation. Curt hard-boiled sentimentalists have been the fashion for some years, *Rice* conforms to this fashion, and as his story is told in the first person, the reader is left in some doubt about the author's own view of a character who, in spite of many admirable qualities, becomes rather wearisome in the end.

H. K.

Peripatetic

Here is yet another Cambridge autobiography, but this time not by any means confined to reminiscences of university life. *Fourscore Years* is the name given by Dr. G. G. COULTON to his book (CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 21/-), and it ranges over a very wide field, the index alone running to twenty-four pages of small print. For the author has been a wandering scholar from his youth up. Starting with three separate schools at King's Lynn, he went on to the Lycée Imperial at St. Omer in 1866. Then came Felsted, followed by a Cambridge scholarship—at St. Catherine's after failing to obtain one at Trinity Hall—and an *agrolat* degree, for unfortunately the Classical Tripos found the young scholar with a head the size of a football, owing to overwork and boils, on which he had imprudently attempted a self-performed operation with a pen-knife. Next began a long series of scholastic appointments—in Dean Vaughan's phrase, "the healthy little humiliations of a schoolmaster's life"—and there again he pursued the same restless course. From Malvern he went to Llandaff, ordination, and a curacy or two: then came the discovery that he was unsuited to clerical life, and a return to scholastic work, at Llandoverly, Heidelberg, Sedbergh, Dulwich, and finally back to Cambridge. This bare chronicle gives no idea of the astonishing variety of the book. Dr. COULTON is observant, honest, combative, with a saving sense of humour. A former reviewer is quoted as having complained that the public seeking his honey might be disturbed by the bee buzzing in his bonnet. There were, in fact, two bees—one concerned with the historical inaccuracies found in Cardinal Gasquet's works, and the other, a prescient bee, foreseeing as long ago as 1887 the unpreparedness of England for war. But there is plenty of honey to make up for any slight disturbance.

L. W.



"He received our lovely calendar and put it straight into salvage. What do I say?"



"I'm sorry, I can't waste time giving you change for telephone calls while all these people are queueing for tickets . . ."



The Successor

TAKING over a Detachment of Kugombas from Lieutenant Sympson has proved to be no joke. Not because he has set a high standard, but because he seems to have conducted affairs in what I can only characterize as a very peculiar and unmilitary manner.

"What hours do you open the canteen?" I asked the British sergeant.

"Mr. Sympson," he said, "used to serve the men at all hours. Except of course with beer. Mr. Sympson disliked rules and regulations of any sort. He said that if there were no rules or

regulations nobody could break them and there wouldn't be any crime."

At four o'clock on my first morning I awakened suddenly in my tent and found myself surrounded by six fierce-looking Kugombas with fixed bayonets and glaring eyes.

"I am at your mercy," I said in my best Swahili, "but I warn you that I am a British officer and, as such, obliged to sell my life dearly. What do you want?"

"Cigarettes, effendi," said the ring-leader. "We have just come off guard. Bwana Sympson always used

to sell us cigarettes when we came off guard."

"Help yourselves," I said, "and pay me in the morning."

After that I made fixed hours for the canteen, but though I would rush back from lunch or some other meal to be there punctually, nobody ever came at the proper time, but always just after I had locked up the canteen box. As they always had splendid excuses for not being on time I went back to the old system, except that I arranged for the British sergeant to have a stock of cigarettes in case any were needed in the night.

Another trouble I had was that Sympson had put off doing an enormous number of jobs during the previous few weeks on the excuse that as he would be leaving soon it would be much better if his successor handled them. All morning on my first day people were ringing up about various things. "Mr. Sympson put off my monthly inspection of the camp till you came," said the sub-area sanitary corporal. "What day would suit you?" Then there was the Garrison Engineer and the Welfare Officer and the Education Officer and the Entertainments Officer and the Sports Officer and the Medical Officer and an odd man who called himself a Liaison Officer, and all the other officers without which no modern army is complete.

I told them all that I would ring them up later, and started to deal with the queue of Kugombas lined up outside my tent. The first man said he had had a letter from home saying his wife had run away with another man and taken the cows as well, and Bwana Sympson had told him that when I came I would know exactly the best thing to do about it.

I listened to ten other problems and then rang up my O.C. at Company Headquarters and said that I had changed my mind and would be delighted to volunteer for the vacancy on the Battle Drill Course which he had so kindly offered me. Was it too late?

"Not at all," he said. "I will send Sympson back to replace you at once."

I then told all the Kugombas to return with their problems at 10.45 next day, and made appointments with the Salvage Corporal, the Garrison Engineer, the Education Officer, the Welfare Officer, the Entertainments Officer, the Sports Officer, and the Medical Officer for 1100 hours sharp.

Save Your Bacon.

"Never waste a scrap of old rag, or carpet, or old rope, string or swine."—*Kent paper.*

Not To-Day, Thank You.

I DO not read what the astrologers say because I prefer to foresee the future myself. Not only because it is more economical in war-time and shows a patriotic willingness to improvise, but because if anyone is going to be wrong it had better be me. This is far less annoying than to be wrong because you took someone else's advice.

At this moment, through half-closed (and somewhat bloodshot) eyes, I see myself in a few years travelling on a bus with my wife. I must apologize for not being able to describe her, and I know this will disappoint you, but I am not yet married. For the purpose of this scenario I see her as the sort of woman who is always wanting me to relate my experiences of the war, and not as one who was in the Services herself and is for ever contradicting me in the middle of my stories. I see myself suddenly rise and leave this bus at speed, the reason being that in the street I have seen dear old Tim Sanders. If you ask me whether, before doing so, I have had the courtesy to pay my wife's fare I cannot answer you, because, as I see the picture, I am too busy getting off the bus, wrong foot first, and diving into the crowd. And there we stand, Tim Sanders and I, gazing at one another open-mouthed with delight, and feeling one another's sleeves as if uncertain where the hand will pop out. I am not sure whether my wife is carried on by the bus so that I do not see her again until late that evening, or whether she gets off at the next stop and stands looking for me along the crowded pavement. But I no doubt signal her from the distance either to insist on her coming to meet Tim or (which is more likely) to stay where she is while I steer Tim down a side street quick.

When my wife and I do fetch up again she is bound to ask why I got off the bus to grab that man—had he made a rude grimace at me? I shall explain that he was dear old Tim Sanders who was in 245 Company, and that I was staggered at seeing him in a bowler hat selling things. Probably she will ask: "Why is that funny? I call it rather sad. Do you mean studs on a tray?" and I shall say "No, no, I mean machinery and such-like on credit." But the point is that in khaki he was such a delightful character. He was so eccentric, and newcomers would ask if he was all there. He was all there, but because he felt the strain of regimentation he used

to pretend some slight insanity as a form of relaxation and individualism. He would go into the Mess and say sharply to anybody who passed him, "You've had it!" No one knew what he meant; although when the phrase swept the country he claimed to have invented it. He said it once to a guest in Mess who misunderstood and said: "Thank you, I would like a whisky and soda," so Tim had to stop and buy one, which cured him for a week at least. Other remarks he made (especially in the middle of a bridge game) were: "Do you feel all right?" and "Do you want to fight?" and everyone was to him a "rat" or "scoundrel." Now I see him back in civilian life he seems quite normal again—which is a pity: it robs him of personality.

Naturally we stand there discussing other people and he takes me along to meet "Chappy," who in the old days was so essentially of the cavalry, by inclination and attire, that new members of the Mess always wanted to know who he was before they asked about anybody else (including the C.O.). By the time they left they had ceased to care. Then there was "Pop" who lived out, and whenever he came into Mess for the evening managed to lose his stripes, in spite of the fact that we used to whip round for a packet of cigarettes with which he could placate his good lady on his return. And Archie, who had the most prodigious effrontery (and thick skin) at cards, snooker and meal-times.

We recalled "Bing," who never spoke, whatever the time of the day, without adding an up-to-the-minute

comment on the weather; and we did not forget "Dicky," who was not so much in the pink as in the purple; he had cheeks like damsons; David, who issued more orders than anybody else by virtue of his position and firmly refused to comply with any issued by anybody else—for which reason alone he continued to wear a hard hat with battle-dress to the end of the war.

There was also recalled a young man with stooping shoulders and heavy moustache, so much like the Victorian villain that we called him "Sir Jasper" and hissed when he appeared. The A.T.S. called him Pluto. And there was George, the best-hearted and straightest (and quite the most outrageously Cockney) of all adjutants; so much so that he was like Gordon Harker in Orderly Room.

This is all I can foresee at the moment, because my eyes have begun to water with the strain; but I do certainly foretell (or should it be fore-speak?) that whenever any of us do meet in this way we shall clutch at each other and weep for joy; we shall hurry away for refreshment at bars, or for dinner at our homes, and boost each other until we firmly believe that in those days we really were terrific characters.

But at this precise moment I am sitting among *these very people* (all of them); surrounded by them, in fact, so closely that it feels like claustrophobia; and I have never in my life encountered bigger bores, or people with more clodlike mentality and more irritating affectations!

(Reason: I have just heard that my leave is stopped.)



The Phoney Phleet

XXXV—H.M.S. "Prang"

MINE-sweeping brings the same delight
As mushroom-picking, by and large;
The crop that burgeons overnight—
The search—the harvest (free of charge).

Lieutenant Platt chose this career
And nobly Whitehall played the game.
They gave the *Prang* the finest gear
And full instructions for same.

A gallant ship, respectful crew,
Devoted captain . . . mighty fine!
But—this was literally true—
They'd never found a single mine.

Not one. At every other base
A daily dozen strewed the path,
But here, this desert of a place
Was safer than a baby's bath.

What made it ten times worse was that
A British minefield, richly stocked,
Lay round the headland; and to Platt
It seemed those mines sat up and mocked.

Yes, mocked him in their serried lines
With sneering unexploded grins.

He raved "You wait, you bally mines!
You eggs! You wait and see who wins!"

The weeks, the months dragged on. His score
Remained consistently a duck.
He couldn't stand it any more;
On June 6th he ran amuck.

He'd show those mines what *Prang* could do!
And charging down their ordered rows
He one by one (or sometimes two)
Dispatched them, shouting "Up she goes!"

He knew that this was . . . (Wallop!) . . . sin,
That he would probably . . . (Bang!) . . . shot,
But what of that? His eye was in
And he . . . (Crash!) . . . detonate the lot.

At last but one remained intact
Of all the plethora there'd been.
He bumped it off and—this is fact—
It bagged a German submarine.

* * * * *
This shows that Virtue's Just Reward
May come by Many Devious Ways;
Alternatively, If You're Bored
Cut Loose—it Very Often Pays.



"Officer, how do we get to the native quarter?"

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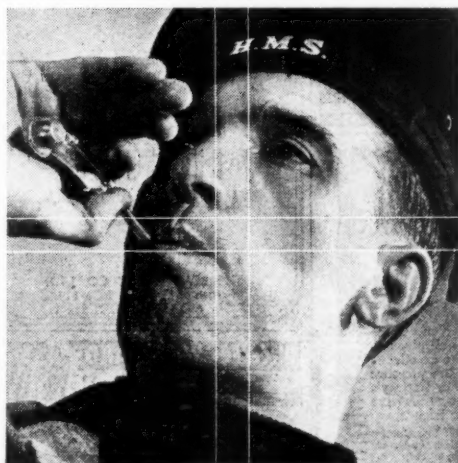
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GREEN SQUARES. A mixture of the old original Scottish type of medium strength and medium cut, made from selected Empire leaf. Per oz. 2/7

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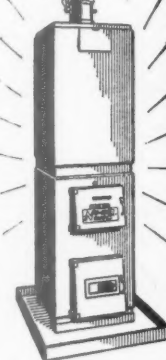
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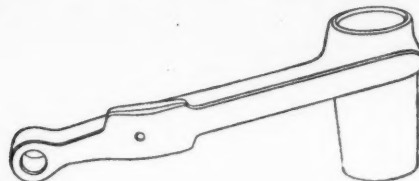


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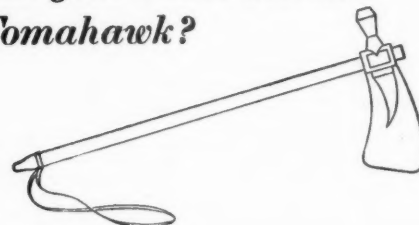
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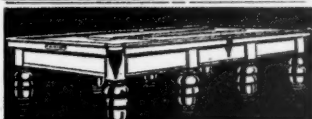
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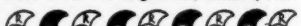
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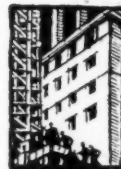
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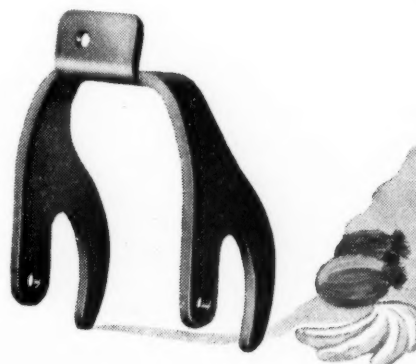


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